
Operational Assistance Scheme for VOs

GUIDELINES 2020

Operational Assistance Scheme for VOs

Terms of Reference

The Operational Assistance Scheme for VOs is a temporary, ad hoc, “Covid-19 Operational Assistance VO Fund” managed by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS) and on behalf of the Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Sports and Voluntary Organisations and supported by the Ministry of Finance.

1. Purpose of COVID-19 Assistance Scheme for VOs

- a) The main purpose of this Scheme is to assist Voluntary Organisations during the COVID-19 Pandemic situation, which had a direct or indirect impact on Voluntary Organisations.
- b) This Scheme is to assist financially enrolled and compliant registered Voluntary Organisations (VOs) with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations (CVO).
- c) The **Aims of the Scheme** shall be to:
 - i. Support VOs whose operation is related and essential for the the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - ii. Support VOs which, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, may be suffering a reduction in its services being offered, which is resulting in a loss of employment.
 - iii. Support VOs which, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, may face difficulties to restart the operation at post pandemic stage.
- d) This Fund shall be allocated on a first-come-first-serves basis depending on the availability of funds.
- e) Requests which are not considered not to be related to the COVID-19 pandemic shall be deemed not eligible for funding support under this Scheme.

2. COVID-19 Assistance Scheme for VOs Budget

The total amount of funds allocated in the COVID-19 Assistance Scheme for VOs shall be of €3,000,000.00. Operational aspect of allocation of funds. Once the allocated funds are utilised, there will not be any replenishment of this Fund.

The budget under this Scheme shall be eligible for the period 16th March 2020 till the 30th September 2020. This period shall be divided into two phases, Phase 1 from the 16th March 2020 till the 30th June 2020 and Phase 2 from the 1st July 2020 till the 30th September 2020.

All applications by the Voluntary Organisations, must be filed with the administrators of this Scheme by 31st July 2020. Late applications will not be eligible for funding under this Fund.

a) Budget Allocations

The budget shall be distributed under four different allocations supporting the aims of the same Scheme.

- i. **Staff Costs** of full-time and part-time employees engaged directly with the Voluntary Organisation – **€2,100,000.00**;
- ii. **Utility Bills** - **€350,000.00**;
- iii. Costs related to **Services** rendered during COVID-19 - **€475,000.00**;
- iv. Emergency Fund to support **Supplies** related to services rendered by VOs during COVID-19 - **€75,000.00**.

b) Eligible items and Documentation required in relation to Budget Allocations

- i. **Staff Costs**
 - a. VOs shall apply for *Wage Supplement* of full-time and part-time employees engaged directly with the Voluntary Organisation and registered with Jobs Plus. Part-time employees are only eligible for such assistance if they are not receiving any similar assistance from a similar scheme and they cannot apply under two different Voluntary Organisations.

- b. The eligible full time employees and part time employees, the employees should have been employed with the VO as end December 2019.
- c. The VO shall present the National Insurance (NI) of all employees who are listed in the application. For eligibility, the VO must proof that it does not have any pending payments of National Insurance and Income Tax dues for year ending December 2019.
- d. For the duration of Phase 1 full time employees of VOs operating in sectors working in the Social, Humanitarian, Health, Disability and Animal Welfare which suffered drastically due to the COVID-19 pandemic or had to temporarily suspend operations on the order of the Superintendent of Public Health will be entitled to up to five days' salary based on a monthly wage of €800. Part-time employees will be eligible €500 per month. The time period of Phase 1 is applicable for the months of March, April, May and June 2020.
- e. For the duration of Phase 2 full time employees of VOs operating in sectors working in the Social, Humanitarian, Health, Disability and Animal Welfare which suffered drastically due to the COVID-19 pandemic or had to a tapered aid of €600 for Full timers and €375 for Part Timers. The duration period for Phase 2 covers the months of July, August and September 2020.

ii. **Utility Bills**

- a. The Scheme shall support up to 80% of the VO Utility Bills to a maximum of €250 euros/3months.
- b. Utility bills need to be addressed on the VO's name or the VO needs to have a leasing agreement of the premises for which the utility bill is addressed.
- c. Any reimbursement of Utility Bills, will be reimbursed for bills covering the period March till September 2020 period.

iii. **Services rendered during Covid-19**

- a. The Scheme shall support up to 50% of the expenses to a maximum of €1,000 for the following expenses and other costs which may be deemed eligible by the board:
 - i. Fuel in relation to services rendered directly related to COVID-19,
 - ii. Telephone Bills,
 - iii. Internet related expenses,
 - iv. Gozo mobilities (Gozo Ferry tickets in relation to services rendered directly related to COVID-19),
 - v. Fixtures and equipment directly related to Health and Safety in line with the guidelines and protocols arising from Public Health directives in relation to COVID-19.
- ~~v.~~vi. The invoices presented must cover expenses incurred during the period March 2020 and September 2020.

3. Requesting funding and Allocation of funds

Applications shall be formally submitted by the legal responsible person of the VO through the online application found on www.vofunding.org.mt .

All applications for assistance under the Scheme shall be vetted MCVS Officials for eligibility and compliance. Eligible applications from enrolled and compliant VOs shall be forwarded to the MCVS Adjudication Committee for evaluation and adjudication. The MCVS Adjudication Committee shall also monitor the overall process and procedure undertaken by MCVS Officials in relation to the Scheme.

4. Terms of Procedure - Application and Adjudication Process

- a) Online applications shall be vetted and adjudicated by the MCVS Official for eligibility (Annex 1) and compliance.
- b) Only VOs enrolled and compliant with the Commissioner for VOs can apply and shall be awarded financial support under the Scheme. All applicants will be cross-checked with the Office of the Commissioner for VOs.
- c) Eligible applications shall have the computation of their request and the verification of the required documentation undertaken by the MCVS Official.
- d) Applications shall then be presented to the MCVS Adjudication Committee to be evaluated according to the scoring sheet as per Annex 2.
- e) The MCVS Adjudication Committee shall evaluate and adjudicate each application.
- f) An application may be classified either 'approved' or 'rejected'.
- g) The MCVS Adjudication Committee shall reserve the right to ask for further evidence before issuing its final decision on a particular application.
- h) The decision of the MCVS Adjudication Committee is final.
- i) Officials from the Ministry for Finance and Financial Services, will have the powers to audit applications and the process of adjudication, at any moment in time. If infringements are found, the Ministry for Finance and Financial Services can ask for reimbursement of funds disbursed and even close the Fund forthwith.
- j) Once decision is confirmed, the MCVS shall prepare either the Grant Agreement (in duplicate), drawn between MCVS and the beneficiary VO or the letter of refusal, as may be the case.
- k) The Grant agreement (in duplicate) or the letter of refusal is signed by the Chairperson of MCVS.
- l) The Grant Agreement is the official document which shall guide the all related procedure.
- m) a contract shall be drawn between MCVS and the beneficiary VO.
- n) On signing of the Grant Agreement the beneficiary VO shall start receiving disbursements, on a monthly basis, and after the presentation of receipts from the VO.

- o) VOs are expected to comply by the principles of transparency and accountability.
- p) Once the allocated budget is exhausted the Scheme shall be deemed closed.
- ~~q)~~ The Fund shall be deemed to be closed as end September 2020, irrespective of whether the funds would have been utilised or not.
- ~~r) q)~~ Any unused funds are to be refunded back to the Ministry for Finance and Financial Services.

Annex 1

Compliance Grid - Operational Assistance Scheme for VOs

Date: _____

Request Ref: _____

Name of VO: _____

<u>Administratively Compliant</u> <u>Criteria</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Request submitted by legal representative of the VO			
Fits with at least one of the purposes of the Fund			
Not eligible for other funds or not already obtained funding,			
Project submitted falls within remit of the VO			
The VO is enrolled and in compliance with the regulations set by the Office of the Commissioner of VO			
Financials submitted			
Documentation submitted			

 Secretary

Annex 2

Score Sheet - Operational Assistance Scheme for VOs

Request Ref: _____

Name of VO: _____

Marks allotted	Criteria	Marks scored
30	Financial Proposal	
30	Risk to the VO if project is not supported	
20	Operational capacity of applicant to undergo request	
20	VO Benefit to the community	
100	Total (pass mark: 75%)	

Chairman _____

Member _____

Member _____

Secretary _____

Date: _____

Score Sheet Criteria - Operational Assistance Scheme for VO's

Criteria	Marks allotted	Sub-criteria 1	Sub-criteria 2	Sub-criteria 3
Financial Proposal	30	The financial projections are presented as a total without giving the breakdown of costs leading to this total. (5)	The financial projections are presented as a total giving the breakdown of some of the costs leading to this total. (15)	The financial projections are presented as a total giving the breakdown of all costs leading to the total. (30)
Risk to the VO if proposal is not supported	30	There is no risk to the VO if the proposal is not supported. (5)	Only part of the VO operation poses a risk if the proposal is not supported. (15)	The whole operation of the VO poses a risk if the proposal is not supported. (30)
Operational capacity of applicant to undergo request	20	The VO will not be capable to undergo the proposal even if supported. (5)	The VO is capable to undergo the proposal with limitations related to resources (financial or human). (10)	The VO is capable to undergo the proposal successfully if supported. (20)
VO benefit to the community (members, clients and community at large)	20	No significant benefit to community. (5)	Only direct members of the VO will benefit from the proposal. (10)	Clients and the community in general benefit from the proposal. (20)

Pass mark: 75